

## Mary Ann (Rosalette) Grates, IHM

*"God provides the circumstances for change, we do not.  
You have to be willing to take a risk."*



Sister Mary Ann Grates came to the IHM community unconventionally. "IHMs taught me for 12 years," she says. "When I was a senior in high school, I went to my homeroom teacher, Sister Ann Loretta Murphy, IHM. I told her I thought I had a vocation but wanted to be a social worker. She told me the IHMs were strictly teachers; we should find a community that did social work. And that was the Felician Sisters in Livonia, Michigan."

Sister Mary Ann joined the Felicians; however, she taught for 19 years. After her mother had a heart attack, she moved in with IHM Sisters in Harbor Beach, Michigan, to attend to her mother's care while teaching at Our Lady of Lake Huron." I was still a Felician. I wore my habit and I fulfilled my obligations."

After three years, Sister Mary Ann was asked to return to the Felicians. But she had been exposed to a different spirit. "IHMs were a renewed community. I wanted to be a part of it." Sister Mary Ann emphasizes that she was never unhappy as a Felician. "Although I never did social work, I remained in religious life because I wanted to be a sister. Religious life was far more important than my ministry."

She took a leap of faith by joining the IHMs and taught for over 10 years. Then she went to work at St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City, entering a clinical pastoral education program and becoming a board-certified chaplain. Sister Mary Ann says, "It was as if something in me awakened." She ministered for 26 years at St. Frances Regional Medical Center in Wichita, Kansas, working in the



ICU, the psychiatric, alcohol treatment and skilled care units. She also started programs to teach active listening techniques, grief counseling and assertiveness.

Sister Mary Ann's work at St. Frances did not go unnoticed. She received two awards for excellence: one while working in the Behavioral Health Center and another in the Medical Center. Sister Mary Ann ministered to patients with inoperable cancer and counseled parents who had lost their children. She credits her ability to minister to the Holy Spirit. "I think the Holy Spirit was active in my life, telling me what to say and do."



"Becoming an IHM allowed me to grow and was also challenging. They encouraged me to take risks and I did, giving up a teaching profession I was comfortable in to become a chaplain, which was much more challenging."

Reflecting on her time in the IHM community, Sister Mary Ann says she is "so grateful. If I had not become an IHM, I would never have been a chaplain. I transferred because I saw it as an opportunity for growth and enrichment -- things you felt within your own self could be expressed."